

October 3, 1958

Dr. Ruth T. Gross
Associate Professor in Pediatrics
Stanford University School of Medicine
San Francisco 15, California

Dear Dr. Gross:

Having seen your very cordial letter of September 29, and the accompanying material (which I was delighted to have) I am sure you would have a splendid and fruitful time with Cavalli and vice versa. Between ourselves, we would be very pleased to have him in our own department, though there unhappily seems little prospect of this just now, so we can do the next best thing, Mahomet-Mountain style. With the biochemical background you already have, it seems to me you'd best learn what more you'd need in that field by actually doing it, and where could you get better backing in it than at Stanford after Kornberg arrives?

The reason I would recommend Cavalli to you is the breadth of his approach to human genetics. His biometry is as sound as you could find, but his basic interests are experimental, so you won't be bored by it. And one has to face the fact that an irreducible minimum of pedigree analysis is still essential in human genetics. But you won't find biochemical research as profound as Kalckar or Horecker's. The Sardinian problem you mention may not be so narrow, and you would face the problem of trying to account for the persistence of the gene in Mediterranean populations, presumably through some advantage of the heterozygote. I am sure you could get the necessary facilities at Milan for the ancillary biochemical studies relevant to such a project.

Rome would be a waste of time, unhappily. I feel the same way about it.

Harry Harris at London would be a very strong bet indeed - if you'll look at his little book "An Introduction to Human Biochemical Genetics" (published as a Eugenics Laboratory Memoirs; XXXVII, Galton Laboratory) you'll see what I mean. His main interest now is in aminoaciduria (e.g., Brit. Med. Bull. 1957, 13 (1): 26-28) and he is at the Department of Biochemistry, London Hospital Medical College, London E.1.) Your preference for the Italian air would be enough to tip the balance

I am hoping the NIH Study Section will meet at Stanford in January and give me a chance to meet you then, if not sooner.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Medical Genetics